

## Hold My Head Inside Your Hands by urdearestmom

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, This was requested, and inspired by some lovely artwork, we DESERVED this scene and I will die mad about not getting it

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2021-04-27

**Updated:** 2021-04-27

**Packaged:** 2022-04-01 01:10:16

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 2,493

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

After leaving the tunnels and returning to the Byers' house, Mike waits for El. As if 353 days wasn't already enough.

# Hold My Head Inside Your Hands

## Author's Note:

hello lovelies!! this is a short little piece I wrote today that was inspired by artwork done by @mittydraws on Instagram (link here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/COIsKSigA0l/?igshid=16hqd02rb3sr9>) and check out the rest of her work if you'd like because it's GORGEOUS !!!!!

someone else on Instagram then asked if I would write something about it so here it is. Hope you enjoy!!!!

At this point, he doesn't know or even care how long it's actually been. He just knows it's been *entirely too long*.

Where the fuck is Hopper?

Mrs. Byers had returned with Will, Nancy and Jonathan in tow about half an hour before. Jonathan had carried an unconscious Will straight to his bedroom, their mother following, while Nancy had walked over to Mike and crushed him in a hug. He'd been surprised for a moment before hugging her back; the two of them weren't really the most touchy-feely of siblings or even very close at all. They had been, once, but that was a long time ago.

Stepping back, she had furrowed her brows. "Why are all of you covered in dirt?" She'd asked, surveying the ragtag group of thirteen year olds spread out in the living room. "Where's Steve?"

They'd explained what happened, talking over each other loudly and then telling each other to be quiet because Will and Steve were sleeping, as thirteen year olds were wont to do.

"I'm going to kill him," Nancy fumed, before Dustin interjected in the older boy's defense.

"It was Mike's idea, Steve didn't want to let us go!" He said, causing

Mike to glare at him. Right now was not the time to get him in trouble with his sister.

Nancy turned to him, surprised. “ *You* came up with that crazy plan?”

He shrugged. He didn’t know what to say, honestly; it had come to him and he knew they had to do something to help El.

*El.*

God, just remembering that she’s on her way back is enough to keep him awake even after the insanely long night he’s just had. It almost feels like a dream, knowing that she’s alive and that she was listening to him all year. She’d missed him just as much as he missed her.

Which is *why* he’s so anxious for Hopper to get back. He needs to see her, to talk to her, feel her and know that she’s really *there*. When she had walked through the door to the Byers’ house, Mike had thought a demodog had killed him and he was in heaven for a second, but then decided that not even heaven could be that good. Unfortunately, they hadn’t had any time together since everyone had split up so quickly, and now he waits.

He’s been pacing by the front windows for the last fifteen minutes, looking outside every so often to watch for headlights on the road. The house is quiet. Nancy has disappeared somewhere (probably with Jonathan, if Mike has to guess. Her thing with Steve has taken a weird turn lately), Mrs. Byers hasn’t come out of Will’s room, Steve’s still asleep slumped on the kitchen table, and the rest of his friends are spread on the living room floor, also asleep.

Or so he thinks, until a voice pipes up from behind him. “Do you think they’re okay?”

He whips around to stare at Max, who freezes when he does. “What?”

“Hopper,” she says. “...and El.”

Mike turns back to the window. “They’ve been gone too long.”

"I thought what we did... helped them," she continues. She joins him at the window, looking outside.

"I hope so," he replies. "I don't know." He sneaks a glance at her out of the corner of his eye, and he thinks she looks incredibly tired and paler than usual. He probably doesn't look much different. "Why are you still awake? I thought you were sleeping."

Max shrugs. "I was trying to, but I couldn't fall asleep. Lucas snores."

At that, Mike smiles a little bit. He's been the victim of Lucas' loud snoring at one too many a sleepover not to know that. He's tuned it out at the moment, but Max is right. "He sounds like a tractor."

"You know, I would ask how you know what a tractor sounds like, but I just remembered where we are," Max teases, giving him a joking little smile, and he can't help the twitch of his lips at the dig. Their town is pretty rural, he'll give her that.

"You should try to sleep," he says in return, and Max's face falls.

"Yeah," she answers quietly. "I'll try."

Suddenly, they're both illuminated by a light from outside, and it's Hopper's truck. In a second, Mike has thrown the front door open and run into the yard, completely disregarding any level of quiet he was trying to keep.

"Where's El?!" He asks frantically, watching as Hopper exits the truck and comes around the front of it.

"She's fine, kid," Hopper says gruffly. "Out like a light."

The man walks to the passenger side door and opens it, sliding his arms in to lift El out of the seat, and Mike goes around him to shut the door. He catches a glimpse of her in Hopper's arms, her face ghostly white. She looks like she got two black eyes, but he knows it's just the makeup she's wearing.

Max is still standing in the doorway as the three of them come up the steps but moves quickly out of the way and then closes and locks the door behind them.

“The couch,” she says to Hopper. “We left the couch for her.”

Hopper grunts as he leans down to set El on the couch, then pulls her forward so Mike can tuck a pillow behind her head as Max lays a blanket over her. Satisfied, he lets Max take him to Joyce while Mike goes into the kitchen to find a clean washcloth and grab a stool to sit on.

When he returns a minute later, the washcloth dampened with some warm water, El hasn’t moved. She looks peaceful and Mike is hoping he won’t accidentally wake her by cleaning her up. There’s not much to be done about her hair until she gets up and showers, but he can wipe off the makeup around her eyes and the stain of blood under her nose.

For a moment, he stays in that peace, holding her hands and just looking at her. She’s asleep, but she’s really here with him right now. Alive and well.

He starts by gently holding her chin to keep her steady while he cleans up the crusted flecks of dried blood on the lower half of her face, freezing and cringing when she stirs at his touch, but continues when she doesn’t wake up. The eyeshadow is harder to wipe away without using too much pressure, but he gets most of it and El’s face is all clean.

Cleaning her up has distracted him from the fact that she’s actually here in front of him, but now that that’s done the facts hit Mike full force. This is *real*. Something in his chest has cracked and he’s swelling with some feeling he can’t describe; sad and happy and angry and worried all at once, and for the first time in a while, genuinely excited. It’s a big feeling, spreading out all over him, and it’s overwhelming. So much so that he can’t help the burning in his eyes that signifies tears for the third time tonight. Max didn’t come back to the living room and there’s no one else awake in here, so he lets them fall.

He doesn’t have a specific reason why he’s crying, but it feels good to let it out. In an effort to stem the flow a little, he hunches over into his hands and balances with his elbows on his knees. Mike almost can’t believe he was right, that El was alive the whole time. She’s real

and she's whole, and she's here with him now. She had been there at his house the same night she disappeared, he *knew* he'd seen her. And now that she'd said she'd heard him calling her every night, he knew those times it had felt like she was really there had been real too. He isn't crazy.

A few minutes later, he's still in the same position, sniffing, when he feels a soft touch on his arm. He jerks up, eyes wide, only to see El awake and looking at him.

"Mike," she says quietly.

"El," he breathes, sliding onto his knees on the floor beside her.

She furrows her brows and raises a hand to his face. "Why... why are you crying?"

Mike shakes his head, smiling and tearing up once again. "I'm just happy to see you."

Her thumb brushes softly against his cheek before she retracts it back to the couch. "Me too," she says. "Long time."

He nods and sniffs, quickly raising his arm to wipe his face on his sleeve. "I missed you."

"Me too," El says again. "Every day."

"How are you feeling?" It's kind of a dumb question, he thinks, she's obviously overused her powers and should be resting, but he asks it anyway. He just wants to hear her voice. It's all he's wanted for the past year.

El grimaces. "Tired. But happy," she answers, giving him a weak smile. "You're here."

Mike nods again, smiling back at her. "I am."

El's hand rises off the couch again and brushes some of his hair away from his forehead. "Come closer," she requests, so he does, wondering what she wants. She's slowly pushing herself upwards on her elbows, coming closer to his face, and suddenly Mike's thoughts

go somewhere he wasn't even near thinking about a second ago. Is she about to-?

She does, but not in the way he was freaking out about. She plants a little kiss on his forehead, less than a second, and it warms Mike right to the core. He thinks it should be illegal for someone to be as cute as El is.

"What was that for?" He asks, letting her grab onto his hands as she lies back down.

"I wanted to," she says simply.

Mike is speechless for a moment. That's so different from the El he'd met a year ago, who was afraid of touch and didn't know anything about affection, whether between friends or siblings or... more. This El just gave him a kiss of her own volition because *she wanted to*.

"You wanted to?"

"Yes," she says, and then frowns. "You didn't like it?"

His eyes widen at the disappointed look on her face, quickly shaking his head. "No!" He exclaims, becoming more frantic as her frown deepens. Why is he so *bad* at explaining things?! "No, I- I really liked it! Promise!"

Upon hearing that word, El's expression softens again. "Promise?" She asks, suddenly looking very vulnerable.

"Yes," says Mike assuredly. "Of course I liked it. I like *you*."

She smiles again and Mike thinks it's the loveliest smile he's ever seen. El's too pretty for his own good. "Okay."

For a few more minutes, Mike just sits there with her in silence, holding her hands and listening to her breathe. He's leaned his head against the couch cushion in his own exhaustion and he thinks she's fallen back to sleep before she speaks again.

"Mike," she whispers.

“Yeah?” He replies immediately, raising his eyes back to hers.

“Do people... do people kiss at the Snow Ball?”

He leans back in shock. How- *why* is she asking him this? He figured she would’ve forgotten all about his stupid request last year.

“What?” He says nervously, swallowing.

“Do they?” She presses.

“Um- yeah, they can,” he answers stiltedly. “Not if they’re only friends, that’s weird, but... people who have dates do.”

“Dates?” El questions, and Mike is starting to feel agitated. He wants her to understand, but at the same time he doesn’t want to explain. It feels embarrassing.

He forges ahead, intent on not disappointing her even if it feels like his face is catching fire. “Yeah, like... someone special you ask to go with you. That’s a date.”

El nods slowly and she looks calmer, like she’s finally figured something out. “So, before... you were asking me to be your date?”

Maybe he’ll just have a stroke and die right here on the Byers’ living room floor, because Mike isn’t sure he can survive this line of questioning. He clears his throat and focuses his gaze on a spot on the couch above El’s head. “Yes.”

“Can we go?”

At that, his heart skips a beat. “You want to?” He asks, looking back at her and thinking he’s gone insane for a second. El might be real, but this moment can’t possibly be.

“Yes,” she answers, and squeezes his hands. “I’m sorry we didn’t go before.”

“No, that’s not your fault,” Mike reassures her. The last thing he wants is for El to feel guilty for not having kept that unrealistic promise after she literally gave her life to keep him and his friends



alive.

"I know, but you were sad. I saw you," she clarifies. "I was sad too."

"It's okay," he says. "You're here now, that's what's important."

"Yes," she replies.

Neither of them says anything else after that, and soon enough El has drifted back to sleep. Mike is still awake however, his mind racing with thoughts about what El had asked. First, she wants to go to the Snow Ball with him, which is insane in and of itself. The idea that a girl as cool as her apparently likes him enough to *ask him* to take her is unbelievable. He wouldn't have believed it could happen if it hadn't just happened.

Second, she asked if people kiss there, implying that she knows what that means. And she'd made the connection to dates and kissing, which means she understands that's what he did last year in the middle school cafeteria on that horrible night.

Which in turn means that- he doesn't even want to entertain the thought in case he's wrong, but he can't help it. If El knows that dates in places like the Snow Ball can kiss each other, and she asked him to take her, then does she want to- holy shit.

She wants to kiss him. The thought alone fills him with such glee that he could probably run around the entire house screaming about it right now, despite the exhaustion taking over him. This is better than anything he could've dreamed, and he can't help the enormous smile that stretches his face as he looks at El.

In order to not bother anyone, though, Mike is going to remain by the couch instead of sprinting across the Byers' home, which is just fine by him. El's hands are warm and reassuring of her presence, so Mike lays his head back on the couch and tries to fall asleep dreaming of her.

In the morning, he'll wake up to his legs numb from sitting on them all night, but he won't even mind the second he remembers why. Everything is worth waking up next to El. He couldn't be happier.

